

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

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Ferry



June 9, 1997

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STATE WATER CONTRACTORS

Steven Macaulay
General Manager
State Water Contractors
455 Capitol Mall, Suite 220
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Macaulay:

The purpose of this letter is to introduce you to a new program in the California Department of Health Services' (Department) Division of Drinking Water and Environmental Management, and to invite you and your organization to participate in its development.

By way of background, the 1996 reauthorization of the federal Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) included amendments that established several new initiatives requiring state implementation. One of those initiatives is the development of a program within each state to protect sources of drinking water. This source water protection program, being developed on a national level by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), envisions a partnership between state and local agencies to ensure that the quality of drinking water sources is maintained and protected.

The initial part of this process is the development of a source water assessment program (SWAP). The SWAP requires delineation of the boundaries of the assessment areas from which one or more public water systems (PWS) receive supplies of drinking water. In addition, it requires an identification of contaminants and their sources within the delineated areas in order to assess the susceptibility of the PWS to these contaminants. The development of the SWAP is the first step in the development of a complete source water protection program.

In California, the Department is responsible for implementing the SDWA. The Department has begun preparing a guidance document for the SWAP, drawing upon the USEPA draft guidance, and on its experience in other related activities, such as watershed sanitary surveys. In addition, the Department, in cooperation with the USEPA, has begun the development of a state wellhead protection program (WHPP). The USEPA has indicated in its draft SWAP guidance that delineation and contaminant assessment elements for groundwater sources are to be consistent with WHPP approaches. Hence, the SWAP and WHPP activities are being coordinated.

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To ensure that the California SWAP adequately addresses the needs and issues that are pertinent to the State, the Department has convened an interagency group to discuss SWAP approaches that are being developed. An important part of the interagency discussion is to determine how best to incorporate and integrate on-going and future activities of other agencies into the SWAP.

In addition, the Department is convening public policy and technical advisory committees, consistent with the USEPA draft guidance, in order to provide the Department with input from stakeholders who represent a variety of interest groups.

We are hopeful that your organization will agree to participate in the public policy process for the development of the SWAP and the WHPP. We are particularly interested in the policy committee's comments on the process that will be used to ensure public participation as the SWAP develops. We also would appreciate your thoughts on other aspects of the SWAP and WHPP.

We anticipate an initial four to six-hour meeting of the committee in Sacramento in mid- to late summer of 1997, prior to the several statewide workshops the Department will hold in the fall to solicit input from other interested parties, and a second committee meeting after the workshops. We also look forward to your comments on the documents we will be providing, and any comments at the workshops on the SWAP that you might also like to share with us. We also hope you will pass information about the project on to your organization's members and others.

The California SWAP guidance document is to be submitted to the USEPA in the summer of 1998. We hope to produce a document that clearly conveys to the public and to drinking water utilities the goals and objectives that the Department and the USEPA seek to accomplish with the SWAP and WHPP, and methodological approaches that are technically appropriate and easily understood by those who will implement the program. Documents related to these programs are enclosed.

I would also like to call your attention to another meeting that may be of interest to you. The USEPA is sponsoring a workshop in Sacramento on June 18, 1997. The enclosed brochure discusses that workshop. The USEPA has extended an invitation to our policy and technical advisory committees. Registrants can sign up for the whole day, as indicated in the brochure, or those interested in attending only the afternoon session (after lunch) can do so at a reduced registration fee of \$35.00. Please note that the Department cannot reimburse you for registration fees.

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We hope you will accept this invitation to join the public advisory committee. If you have any questions about California's SWAP and WHPP, please call Ms. Alexis Milea at (510) 540-2177 or fax her at (510) 540-2152.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David P. Spath".

David P. Spath, Ph.D., P.E., Chief
Division of Drinking Water and
Environmental Management

Enclosures

cc: Alexis Milea, Chief
Standards and Technology Unit
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